

The Truth behind Big Pharma

We all need to take medicine at some time in our lives, but do we always really need these drugs? Global spending on prescription drugs topped over 646 billion dollars in 2006.

Pharmaceutical companies spend approximately \$19 Billion dollars on advertising.

Pharmaceutical advertisements are on every station all day long, telling us to ask our doctor to prescribe this drug or that for whatever ails us. What happened to letting our doctors make a diagnosis before prescribing medications? While we need to be proactive in our healthcare there comes a time when we need to have input from our doctor.

We are now listening as the wholesome mother in the hit TV show *Brothers & Sisters*, actress Sally Field, encourages women to ask their doctors for Boniva. Sally tells how Boniva helps reverse bone loss and prevent osteoporosis. And don't even get me started on the sexual enhancement drugs! Why are these people sitting out in a field in bathtubs? My ten year old little sister asked me what's that about and I replied "Go ask Mommy!" I don't recall seeing those types of commercials when I was that young.

Another example of influence of big Pharma is the ADHD drug Ritalin. This is a drug used to calm children down. More and more Children are being diagnosed with attention deficit and hyper activity. Why is this? Could it be due to the fact that they no longer exercise, rather sit for hours playing violent video games. When they do get up and move around bottled up energy now explodes. So let's give them something to slow them down. In 1990 there was a 300% increase in diagnosis of ADHD and Ritalin prescriptions boomed. It has now become the recreational drug of Choice.

Over Diagnosis of ADHD - In 1996, the United Nations International Narcotics Control Board Concluded That ADHD May in Fact Be over Diagnosed in the United States, and That Many Children Who Have Been Receiving These Medications May Be Inaccurately Diagnosed. ADHD Can Be Reliably Diagnosed Only after a Battery of Observations, Interviews, Psychological Tests and Physical Exams. Studies Have Found However, That Only One-third to One-half of Children, Who Receive This Diagnosis from Pediatricians, Undergo Psychological or Educational Testing to Support the Conclusion.

Pharmaceutical sales reps need to be attractive and out going to sell their drugs. They wine and dine doctors and provide them with huge perks, including travel and bonuses for prescribing their products to YOU! What they don't require is that they know the potential side effects of the drugs they are marketing or that they disclose this information to your healthcare provider. In essence they are glorified legal drug dealers.

Here's what the Pharmaceutical companies don't want you to know. According to the Journal of American Medical Association (JAMA) Drug reactions are the 4th leading cause of death in the United States. Numerous drugs that were prescription only, are now readily available to us in our local grocery store. Once prescriptions are marketed, over the counter package insert warnings are either watered down to include rash, headache or high fever. Many adverse reactions are life threatening.

Commercials are aimed to target their market, us! Consumers are dreaming of a magic pill that will change our mood, weight, or energy levels. Anti-depressant drug side effects include thoughts of suicide! You can't sleep? There's a pill for that. Want to quit smoking - take a pill. What about a pill to stop taking that pill? The average commercial is 60 seconds long with 15 seconds of why you should take the drug and the rest is a speed reading contest of a barrage

of side effects. Tobacco companies were held accountable for addicting consumers to cigarettes and responsible warnings were placed on cigarette packages. What are the pharmaceutical companies doing to protect you from adverse reactions?

Big Pharma is influential in running our country, pouring millions of dollars into political campaigns to assure their candidate wins. What do they have to benefit by this? Legislators helped push thru tort reform, limiting liability on their part when something goes wrong. Drug companies are literally getting away with burying their mistakes without so much as a slap on the wrist. There is rarely compensation for the victim or their family. Pharmaceutical companies earn billions of dollars but they would rather pour millions of dollars into defense funds rather than compensate its customers for bad reactions. The Federal Food and Drug Administration require drug companies to add warnings of reactions during clinical trials.

Package inserts add this information in print so small it would take a microscope to read it. Warnings such as, in rare instances reports of “whatever the reaction is” have been reported.

Package inserts are intended for physicians not the consumer. Post marketing adverse events are the dirty little secret of the drug companies. In February 2005 the FDA held hearings regarding cox 2 inhibitor drugs such as Bextra and Vioxx after whistle blower David Graham blew the lid off this cover-up These non steroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDS) are used to treat arthritis and pain, caused severe reactions to the heart including heart attack and death. Merck and Pfizer failed to disclose scientific research regarding these reactions to the FDA resulting in millions of dollars in awards to its victims and their families. Jean McCawley presented written testimony on behalf the littlest victims of NSAID’s the children. Over the counter children’s ibuprofen has no warning of potentially life threatening side effects of

Stevens-Johnson Syndrome. This information was once again buried by the media and big Pharma!

Why do I know so much about this subject? I am the victim of one of the most severe adverse drug reactions a person can experience. At 11 months old I was prescribed Phenobarbital to control pediatric epilepsy. My mother asked the doctor about side effects and was told the only side effect was drowsiness. I spent 27 days, treated in a burn unit with Stevens - Johnson syndrome. SJS is a rare potentially deadly side effect of that drug. A drug I might add that has never been approved by the FDA and yet it is still being prescribed.

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